An ESSAY
Towards An UNIVERSAL ALPHABET.

HAving observed a great difficulty in truly writing what is pronounced, or truly pronouncing what is written, either in our own or foraign Languages, by the Ordinary Alphabets now in use, arising either from the want of some Letters, or the differing Pronounciation of the same Character or Letter in differing Languages, and the irregularities of its various Sounds in any one Language, I saw a necessity of some such Expedient as I have here attempted, *viz. An Universal Alphabet*, which should contain an Enumeration of all such single Sounds or Letters as are used in any Language, which I have endeavoured by Examining all those Languages which hitherto I have considered. Altho this my attempt be not new, but what before by others hath been attempted, yet I hope what herein I have done will not be unuseful. The Benefits of such a Collection being perfect.

1. Children from their first beginning, be-

ing taught and accuſtomed to the true Expreſſion of all theſe ſingle Sounds or Letters, will without difficulty be brought to pronounce truly and readily any Language how ſeemingly difficult ſoever; for the pretended difficulty to ſome Perſons of Pronouncing ſome Letters, is only that they have not been accuſtomed to pronounce them, either ſingly or in conjunction with others, and this difficulty is chiefly in Perſons come to Age.

2. It will enable any one, accuſtomed to the true Pronounciation of this Alphabet, truly to deſcribe the Pronounciation of any Language whatever, that ſhall in his hearing be diſtinctly pronounced; ſo as another alſo accuſtomed to this Alphabet, although he before never had heard this Language pronounced, ſhall notwithſtanding at firſt ſight of ſuch Writing, be able ſo truly to pronounce it, that it ſhall (if at all) very little differ from the Original Pronounciation. Whereas by the uſe of the common Alphabets, if any ſtrange Language be written, another, and a ſtranger to that Language, ſhall never be able truly to pronounce ſuch Writing, as it ſhould be or was by the Writer intended, nor even the Writer himſelf ſometime after that he hath forgotten what Sound he deſigned to deſcribe.

3. It will alſo be uſeful to perpetuate the true Sounds of any Language, and ſerve as a Standard

dard thereof to after Ages: for if all the ſingle Sounds expreſſable, be here Collected and Characterized, *And that no one Character have more than one Sound, nor any one Sound be expreſſed by more than one Character*; it cannot fall out that any Character ſhould be falſly pronounced, but it will ſoon be diſcovered; for this falſe Sound he giveth it, muſt be the true Sound of ſome other Letter of this Alphabet: and ſo none can Erre herein, but he that wilfully or carelesly will do it.

In this Collection I proceed according to theſe Rules.

1. THat no true ſingle Sound can be truly deſcribed or expreſſed by the Conjunction of any two or more other ſingle Sounds, *Viz.* If a Vowel, by the Conjunction of other ſingle Vowels, or if a Conſonant, by the Conjunction of other ſingle Conſonants.

2. That whatever Sound cannot be expreſſed or deſcribed, but by the Conjunction of two or more ſingle Sounds, is no ſingle but a compounded Sound.

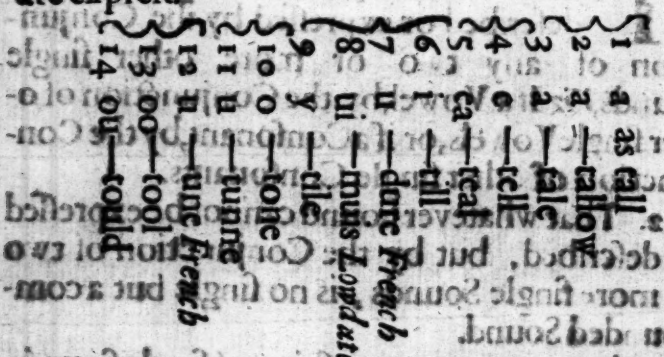
3 That in every compoſition of ſingle Sounds, the particular ſingle Sounds which make up that Compoſition, ought to be truly and clearly diſcerned in the Sound of the Compoſition, otherwiſe it cannot be truly ſaid to be a Compoſition, and compoſed of ſuch ſingle Sounds.

The Single Sounds.

USually named Letters, are commonly distinguished into *Vowels* and *Consonants*. *Vowels* are such as are singly expressable as, *a, e, i, o, u, &c.* *Consonants* are such as cannot singly be expressed without the Conjunction of a Vowel, as, *b, c, f, g,* &c.

Of Vowels.

THe whole number of them are these 14 following, to which, for the better discerning of their Sounds, I have annexed so many words wherein they are expressed, all *English* but three, *Viz.* the 7, 8, 12, because no *English* words occurred to my *memory*, wherein they are exprest.



These are the *Vowels*, each of which are long and short.

Short as in the words, God, Man, Sin.
Long as in Ball, Demand, Seen, *&c.*

Of Dipthongs.

A *Dipthong* in the ordinary use of the Word signifieth a Compound of two Vowels but those in ordinary so named are most of them nothing but only single Vowels, as *ea, oo, ou, eo, ai,* in the Words *teal, look, could, people, main,* &c. That these are but single Sounds will appear, if we consider the Sounds of the Vowels singly, that make those supposed Compositions, and then whether those Sounds in Composition will make out the true Sound required; so as both of them may be clearly discerned in these pretended Compounds. For instance, in *ea* in *Teal.*

Consider the Sound of *e* in the Word *sent,* or in the word *scene;* and *a* in the Word *bait,* or in the Word *and,* or in the Word *rate,* and then whether *e,* in either of the two Sounds going before and *a* in either of the three Sounds following joyned together, will make out the true Sound of *ea* in the Word *teal,* if not, then is it a single Sound; thus, if you proceed to examine all the other, you will I doubt not find the same event, and I believe the true *Dipthongs* and *Tripthongs* in the Greek were no other but a true expression of the single Vowels they joyned together, but in so short a time, as both or all three were expressed in the time

time that in ordinary one single Vowel was express'd.

Of Consonants.

THe whole number of *Consonants* are these undermentioned, as nigh as I could Collect, by examining all the Languages I am acquainted with or have heard express'd, and I think but few, if any single Consonants have escaped my Notice, all which in this following Table I have ranged in 11 Files, and 6 Ranks.

	1	2.	3	4	5
1	B bond	D dark	J Jest	G Game	=
2	P pond	T tart	Ch Chest	K came	=
3	M mind	N name	gn Seigñeur } *Fr.*	ng soñg	=
4	=	dh this	J Jean }	g gave } *l.d.*	V Vally
5	=	th thing	sh shall	ch dach }	F Folly
6		n danse *fr.*			

6	7	8	9	10	11	
=	L land	H hand	Y yarn	R rand	W and	*Fr. sign. Fren.*
=						Ld. *Lowduch*
=						W. — *Welch*
Z Zeal	sh w					
S Seal						

The First File containeth three *Consonants*, the Second six, the Third and Fourth ten, the Fifth and Sixth four, the seventh two, the remaining four each one, in all twenty nine *Consonants*.

The Second Rank in each File contain Derivatives [so I shall name them] in relation to the First,

First Rank, or their Primitives, all alike in kind, so also all the Derivatives in the Third Rank, in the Fourth and Fifth Rank, whereby their Sounds will be the better comprehended.

Those places filled by two strokes (=) signifie that Sounds may be expres'd by the same posture of the Mouth with their Primitives, answering in kind to those in the same Rank wherein they stand, but they would be so like in pronounciation to some others in the Table, that the difference would be too nice for common discernment, and also for that I have not observed them used in any Language I have heard expres'd by a perfect Mouth, I thought it needless to characterize them.

As those of the Fourth and Fifth Rank in the First File are like those of the Fourth and Fifth Rank in the Fifth File, those of the First, Second, Third Ranks in the Fifth File, are like those of the same Ranks in the First File, those of the First, Second, Third Ranks in the Sixth File, are like those of the same Ranks in the Second File.

Some of these above-mentioned twenty nine *single Consonants*, are vulgarly supposed compounded, as *th*, *ch*, *sh*, *gh*, *ng*, &c. But if you shall consider the Sound of each *single Consonant* in the Composition apart, and then the Conjunction of them in that order, so as the *single Sounds* may be clearly discerned, in the Composition you will never make the Sounds required, and if neither by this nor by any other

Conjunction

Conjunction the requisted *sound* can be made but, it must be a single and no compound Sound.

Whereas these single Sounds, vulgarly described as Compounds, ought to have single Characters: and Secondly, that some of the single Characters have in the same Language a different Sound, as c in the Words, *can, mice*; g in the Words *George, Game*, &c. and also a different Sound in different Languages, as *I* Consonant differently expres'd in several Languages, as in *English, Low Dutch, French, Spanish*; and Thirdly, that some *single Sounds* are different characterized in the same Language, as the Sound of *f* in *fame*, and *c* in *mice*, the same Sound by two different Characters; so also *c* in *can*, and *k* in *kind* the same, *&c.* and the same also in different Languages, as *ch* in the *French* Word *chose*, and *sh* in the Word *shall*, the same, *&c.* It will be impossible in the use of the present Characters or Alphabets to add those wanting, and to correct and limit the Sound of others in use, thereby to constitute a perfect Alphabet because people so long accustomed or habituated to such corrupt and differing Expressions of the present Characters, will be always subject on the sight of the old to give them those Sounds they have been used to, and to Spell Words according to their old and corrupt custom, whatsoever Rules shall be set to the contrary; and therefore there will be a necessity of a whole new Set of Characters, both of *Vowels* and *Consonants*.

Nævi, vel signa, in facie apparentia, in qua corporis parte reperiantur præsagire./

Non alienum a nostro proposito duximus hic aliqua de nævis inserere, sive de signis quæ in facie apparent, et in qua abdita corporis parte correspondeant. Aliqua de his a veteribus scriptoribus describuntur, sed inter se varia et repugnantia, nec experientiæ respondentia. Astrologi faciei partes planetis distribuunt, oculos luminaribus, nasum veneri, cæteras cæteris. et hos signare corporis partes eas sub signis quibus dominantur constitutas, quæ etsi veritatem aliquam subolere videntur, falsa tamen et vana comperimus. Inter quos Hali Abhenragel Arabs, aliqua scripsit, vt et Melampus Græcus, aliqua etiam circumferantur sub nomine Merlini Britanici, sed manuensium erroribus adeo depravata, vt nil lucis ex ijs nancisci potuimus et quotquot videri contigit, vanos et fallaces omnes comperimus./